

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TECH, IN

SUBJ: ROUND UP WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY: US-INDIA

RELATIONS; NAC; LOS

BEGIN SUMMARY:

1. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HOPES THAT DURING THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD US-INDIA RELATIONS CAN ENJOY A PERIOD OF CALM DURING WHICH THE FOCUS IS ON COOPERATION. WE TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE IN THIS CONTEXT OF THE ISSUES OF KOREA AND PUERTO RICO AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AND AN AGREEMENT ON THE LOS IN NEW YORK IN AUGUST. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SEEMED RECEPTIVE TO OUR IDEAS BUT REMAINED, AS USUAL, NON-COMMITTAL. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE SUGGESTION OF FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA, THE DCM CALLED AT HIS OFFICE LATE JULY 23. SPEAKING INFORMALLY BY HIMSELF, MEHTA BEGAN BY MUSING ABOUT THE COURSE OF
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US-INDIA RELATIONS IN THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. HE

HOPED, HE SAID, THAT AREAS OF CONTROVERSY, PARTICULARLY PUBLIC CONTROVERSY, COULD BE AVOIDED AND THAT THE FOCUS OF RELATIONS COULD BE ON AREAS OF COOPERATION. HE INDICATED THAT INDIA CONTINUED TO BE QUITE SENSITIVE ABOUT CRITICISM OF ITS DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. THIS DID NOT JUST APPLY TO THE US AS IT WAS A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PROBLEM IN WESTERN EUROPE WHERE THERE IS CRITICISM AND SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION FROM SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. MEHTA HOPED THAT RECENT POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY (MEANING BETTER INDIAN BALANCE IN RELATION WITH GLOBAL PARTIES, RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS WITH PAKISTAN, ETC.) COULD BE SEEN AS A DIRECT RESULT OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS.

3. THE DCM PICKED UP MEHTA'S COMMENT THAT THERE WERE AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST IN WHICH WE COULD COOPERATE, NOTING THAT THIS PARTICULARLY APPLIED TO ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. THERE IS NO REASON WHY, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE COULD NOT BE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR DELEGATIONS AT THE PARIS CIEC MEETINGS. THE DCM DESCRIBED THE BREAKDOWN THERE SAYING THAT INDIA DID NOT HAVE AN INTEREST IN EITHER ISSUE. QUITE THE CONTRARY, IT WAS IN INDIA'S INTEREST TO PROCEED WITH A BALANCED AGENDA AS INDIA HAD MUCH TO GAIN FROM SUCCESS AT PARIS. MEHTA GOT THE POINT AND SEEMED TO AGREE.

4. THE DCM WENT ON TO SAY THAT THERE WERE POLITICAL ISSUES ON WHICH THERE COULD BE COOPERATION AND INDEED IN WHICH INTERESTS WERE EITHER MUTUAL OR NOT IN CONFLICT. INDIA WAS ONE OF FOUR OR FIVE COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD HAVE MAJOR INFLUENCE AT COLOMBO AND KNOWLEDGE OF THIS AROUND THE WORLD GAVE INDIA A PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY. MEHTA NODDED IN AGREEMENT. THE DCM EXPLAINED THAT THE US WAS NOT ENGAGED IN AN ALL OUT EFFORT TO INFLUENCE COLOMBO; WE WERE NOT SENDING A HUNDRED PEOPLE TO SRI LANKA (MEHTA SAID THE NORTH KOREANS WERE SENDING 500) BUT THERE WERE A FEW ISSUES OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO US AND WE WERE STATING OUR INTERESTS AND VIEWS CLEARLY TO COUNTRIES ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE. PUERTO RICO WAS ONE SUCH ISSUE. THE US HAS GRANTED SELF-DETERMINATION TO PUERTO RICO AND PUERTO RICO HAS DECIDED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TO RETAIN COMMONWEALTH

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STATUS WITHIN THE US. SHOULD THE PUERTO RICAN LEGISLATURE PASS A RESOLUTION FAVORING INDEPENDENCE, THE PRESIDENT WOULD IMMEDIATELY RECOMMEND THAT THE CONGRESS GRANT THAT INDEPENDENCE. CONSEQUENTLY, WE WOULD BE DISTRESSED IF ANY INTERNATIONAL BODY TOOK UP THE STATUS OF PUERTO RICO. MEHTA REPLIED THAT HE, OF COURSE, UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM OF THE EXISTENCE OF A BODY OF PRECEDENT ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS THIS IN NON-ALIGNED RESOLUTIONS. THE

COLOMBO CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHAT HAD BEEN SAID PREVIOUSLY ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVED THE DRAFT POLITICAL DECLARATION FOR COLOMBO WAS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER ALGIERS REGARDING PUERTO RICO. MEHTA CLAIMED THAT ONE SHOULD NOT LOOK TO THE DECLARATION OF A NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE FOR THE VIEWS OF MANY OF THE MEMBERS. THE DCM SAID YES, HE UNDERSTOOD THIS, BUT WHEN ISSUES LATER CAME UP IN THE UNGA OR THE COMMITTEE OF 24, COUNTRIES TOLD US THEY WERE COMMITTED TO THE NON-ALIGNED POSITION; THEREFORE WE WERE FORCED TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF THE NON-ALIGNED DECLARATION ITSELF. MEHTA THEN SAID YES, HE UNDERSTOOD. THE DCM SAID MANY COUNTRIES INDICATE THEIR AGREEMENT WITH US BUT NONE ACTUALLY DISSENT WHEN HE NON-ALIGNED MEET. MEHTA SAID YES, THAT'S RIGHT. THE POINT SEEMED TO HAVE SOME IMPACT ON HIM. THE DCM CONCLUDED ON PUERTO RICO BY SAYING THAT A NOTICEABLY POSITIVE ACTION BY INDIA AT COLOMBO WOULD HAVE A DEFINITE FAVORABLE EFFECT ON THE CLIMATE OF US-INDIA RELATIONS. THE DCM HANDED MEHTA A COPY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S AIDE-MEMOIRE WHICH HAD ARRIVED IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE MEETING.

5. THE DCM SAID THAT KOREA WAS ANOTHER POLITICAL ISSUE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE

US AND ONE IN REGARD TO WHICH WE HAD COMMON INTERESTS. HE REVIEWED THE SECRETARY'S SEATTLE PROPOSALS ON KOREA, LEAVING A TEXT. HE INDICATED THE HARMFUL EFFECT OF ANY NON-ALIGNED STATEMENT, SUCH AS THAT OF ALGIERS, WHICH FLATLY SUPPORTED THE NORTH KOREAN POSITION. WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A BALANCED STATEMENT WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO GET BACK TO THE UNGA CONSENSUS RESOLUTION OF 1973 AND CREATE A CLIMATE IN WHICH FOUR-POWER DISCUSSIONS MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN NEW YORK. AGAIN, MEHTA INDICATED UNDERSTANDING OF THE US POSITION INCLUDING THAT REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MAINTAINING THE MILITARY BALANCE. HE OFFERED NO COMMENT, HOWEVER.

6. A DISCUSSION OF WHO WILL REPRESENT INDIA IN NEW YORK (FOREIGN MINISTER WILL GO DURING THE LAST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER FOR THE UNGA AND MEHTA HOPED TO GO THE LAST WEEK IN OCTOBER AND THE FIRST IN NOVEMBER; NEITHER WILL ATTEND THE LOS MEETINGS AT WHICH INDIA WILL CONTINUE TO BE REPRESENTED BY LAW MINISTER GOKHALE.) LED TO A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON LAW OF THE SEA. MEHTA SAID THE RUSSIANS HAD FOLLOWED THE US DELEGATION TO DELHI AND THERE HAD BEEN SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM. IN PARTICULAR, THE RUSSIANS WANTED INDIAN SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL ARCTIC AREAS FOR THE SOVIET UNION WITHOUT BEING WILLING TO SUPPORT INDIAN SPECIAL INTERESTS. THE DCM RESTATED THE VIEW OF

THE US DELEGATION THAT INDIA PLAYS A SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LOS NEGOTIATIONS THAT IT COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OR THE FAILURE OF THE AUGUST CONFERENCE. INDIA SHARED INTERESTS AS A MARITIME POWER WITH THE US AND THE TIME HAD COME TO TAKE POSITIONS BASED ON THOSE INTERESTS AND MAKE THE COMPROMISE NECESSARY TO REACH AGREEMENT.

7. COMMENT: MEHTA IS A REASONABLE AND THOUGHTFUL PERSON AND WE BELIEVE SAW THE LOGIC OF US POSITIONS. NEVERTHELESS, INDIA'S NON-ALIGNED STRATEGY IS LIKELY TO PREVENT IT FROM STICKING ITS NECK OUT ON THE ISSUES WE HAVE RAISED. HIS CANDOR ABOUT DIFFERENCES WITH THE SOVIETS ON LOS UNDERLINES THE EXTENT TO WHICH DIFFERENCES IN A NUMBER OF AREAS ARE FIGURING IN INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. SAXBE

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